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* Attached for Washington only is ☐ original report which he wrote for ☐ who wanted this information as background material for a speech he planned to make to CoVP leaders for this reason ☐ requested limited distribution of this report.

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Subject: The National League

Report No: MAY-2365

Date of Information: December 1950

Place Acquired: Vienna, Austria

Date Acquired: 8 January 1951

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Date of Report: 15 January 1951

Source: An Austrian Government official.

The following is a free translation of a report which was prepared by an Austrian Government employee at the request of []

Much of this information is well known but the report is published since it represents the viewpoint of the Ministry of the Interior.

1. Another "Russian Party", (Dr.) Adolf Slavik's National League appeared on the Austrian political scene in the early part of 1950. As expected this organization has failed to gain influence on established groups.
2. It is a well-known fact that Dr. Slavik, as a "belastet" Nazi is according to prevailing de-Nazification laws, unable to assume official leadership of the League. For this reason Josef Kinnick was named as the first leader of the League, then later one Walter Fial. Both of these men were mere figureheads. However this situation changed when the former Landesobmann of the VdU of Lower Austria, Ferdinand Haidner from Baden, joined the National League with 10 prominent VdU members from Lower Austria. Haidner, meanwhile, was elected Bundesobmann in the General Assembly of 1 October 1950 and (Dr.) Herbert Gittinger of Graz his deputy.
3. The original program of the League was extremely vague. Haidner and his colleagues, however, have now set forth a more precise program for the League which includes the following points:
 - a. Neutrality for Austria
 - b. Rapprochement with the East.
 - c. Reorientation of Austria's foreign trade by abandonment of the Marshall Plan and expansion of trade relations with eastern nations.
 - d. Planned economy.
 - e. Repeal of National Socialist laws.
 - f. Renunciation of all political traditions with the motto:
"Forward to the communal principle. Feel nationally!
Think internationally! Act socially!"

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4. In order to gain adherents for this program the national leadership of the League has called an appreciably large number of meetings in Vienna and Lower Austria. The League is trying to draw support primarily from ex-Nazis, former officers who have no source of income and all those who are now disillusioned with the VdU (League of Independents). Actually very few people, usually 10 to 30 persons, attend these meetings and conferences. According to available information, the National League has acquired only a few recruits in the course of these meetings. In fact some of those who have been invited to National League conferences have spoken out against the League's pro-Soviet policies. Although they have urged the League to take an independent stand, they have if anything indicated their sympathies with the West. As a result these meetings have proved detrimental to the interests of the National League.
5. In addition to holding meetings, the National League also recruits members by dispatching its agents to people who either have the reputation of being "die-hard" fighters or who played a special role during the Nazi era, and are now in critical straits as a result of their activities during the Nazi regime. The League appeals to the former by offering them prospects of regaining political or military prestige, and to the latter it promises opportunities for making a living and particularly the assurance of personal security with regard to the Soviet Occupation Forces. In this connection it should be noted that the National League has made overtures to the political prisoners in Stein and has offered to help those prisoners who are being detained at the request of the Russians. This type of recruiting is naturally not calculated to bring about mass results. Obviously the National League, at least at present does not intend to form a large party. Instead, it is aiming towards the establishment of a revolutionary cadre organization.
6. Following are a few conclusions regarding present relations between the National League and Soviet authorities in Austria:
 - a. There is no question that the National League, as a receptacle for National Socialist thugs who have unsavory political records, can only develop its activities in the face of Communist attacks and existing de-Nazification laws because it is assured of tolerance if not encouragement from the Soviet Occupation Forces.
 - b. It has been frequently reported that considerable financial assistance has been or will be placed at the disposal of the National League by the Russians. Slavik, himself, denies that the League has received backing from the Soviets and he maintains that he is financed by voluntary gifts many of which come from persons who are trying to insure themselves for things to come. This is entirely possible, for the League's agents are not reluctant to advertise their good relations with the Russians. In fact, the League operates on the premise that it is the one organization which will not only keep Austria neutral in case of an East-West conflict but will also be able

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to protect its non-Communist members from the Communists because of its good relations with the Soviets. It is quite conceivable that this sort of argument will win adherents from the ranks of those Austrians who seek security for the future. It is also certain that this kind of propaganda is not only being tolerated by the Russians but also has their approval.

- c. On the other hand, there has been no evidence that the Russians are ready to extend more than sympathy to the League. For example, in spite of all the League's efforts the Russians have not released a single political prisoner from Steir.
- d. This contradiction between the League's propaganda and the actual attitude of the Russians prompts the question as to whether the League really is an important political factor. This question must be answered in the affirmative because the Russians regard the League as another device for splitting the Austrians' will to resist.

The Austrian Communist Party has the task of undermining the foundations of the Socialist Party; the Democratic Union has Soviet approval because it seems to offer an opportunity to create confusion among the Catholics; the League, the Soviets believe, can exploit Nationalist circles, and the present crisis in the VdU is apparently offering a similar opportunity.

It is possible, however, that the incompetency of the Communist Party may have alerted the Soviets to be on the lookout for another partner, or another stooge, who can accomplish certain tasks which the Communists cannot handle. The Soviets' experiences in the Eastern Zone of Germany may play a part in this regard.

7. According to some reports and to certain statements made by League functionaries, we must assume that the Soviets may plan to assign certain police functions to members of the League during the initial stages of a Soviet attempt to seize power in Austria. The people with whom the National League is most concerned are those whose lives have been uprooted, people who are ready for anything, and who acquired the necessary training and experience in the Nazi Party or German military organizations.

8. All this leads to the following general conclusions:

The National League, with only 3,000 to 4,000 members in Austria, has little influence on the Austrian people at the present time and it is not likely to develop into a large organization in the future. Individuals in the National League are more dangerous than the entire organization which offers no real threat to democratic order in Austria. Nevertheless the League and all those who are affiliated with it should be closely watched by the security authorities as well as the Peoples' and Socialist Parties.

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*Working in Communist Party...
...difficult financial situation and a time by financial attack.*

*...in the National League...
...difficult financial situation and a time by financial attack.*